ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

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July-Sept
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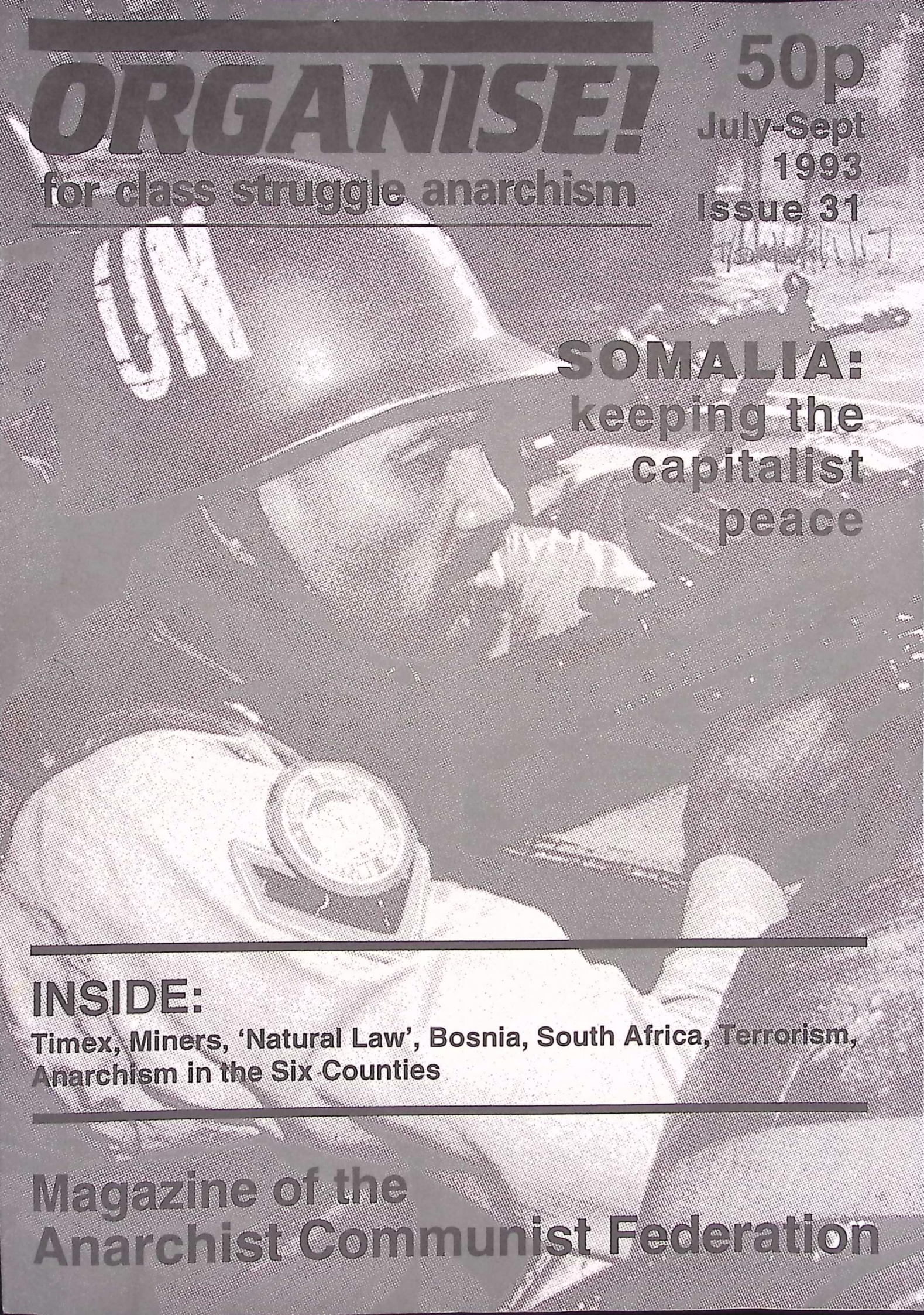
Issue 31



SOMALIA: keeping the capitalist peace

INSIDE:

Timex, Miners, 'Natural Law', Bosnia, South Africa, Terrorism, Anarchism in the Six Counties

Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation

ORGANISE!

ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals.

All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* — as long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all.)

Deadlines for next issue are 4 September for features and reviews, and 11 September for letters and news.

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A role to play

Organise! continues the tradition of criticism and analysis of all the major problems in developing both a revolutionary theory and movement. We think that *Organise!* has an important role to play in the growth of a real revolutionary movement. We know from rising sales that many of our readers feel the same.

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Please send all feedback, contributions for *Organise!*, requests for papers and Press Fund money (payable to ACF) to the London address.

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PRESS FUND

NOW IS A difficult time to be asking for money, with many out of work or wondering if they're going to get the chop. Cash is in short supply.

But *Organise!* desperately needs money to continue to appear and to improve. We need money for our projected pamphlets, for the stickers and posters and leaflets we intend to produce.

So we are asking you, dear reader, to think about sending something in, no matter how small, to help us continue the fight for anarchist communism. We know that many of you value the ideas presented in *Organise!* So please help us by sending in POs, IMOs, or cash. You can even send us a standing order to our account to support *Organise!* regularly.

Write to London address for account details. Dig into your pockets now! Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue:

£60, Sheffield; £110, London; £4, Brighton; £5, France.

Organise! Back Issues

BACK ISSUES of *Organise!* (from issue 14 to issue 28 inclusive) are still available, from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*. They cost 20p & sae each and include:

- *Organise!* 23: Iraq Interview; Greens; ANC; pits; police.
- *Organise!* 24: New World Order; Children; BCCI; Clause 25.
- *Organise!* 25: SOLD OUT.
- *Organise!* 26: Women & Revolution; Direct action; US Greens.
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- *Organise!* 29: Debate on the Unions; Italian Workers Fight Back.
- *Organise!* 30: SOLD OUT.

Who We Are ...

THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. Its structure is based on groups and individual members. We have members in the following areas:

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Chesterfield
Chester-le-Street
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Portsmouth
Saffron Walden
Stoke-on-Trent
Worcester

The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain and internationally, and has contact with like-minded anarchists overseas.

For all contact write to:
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Union sabotage

THE SLAUGHTER OF the pits continues with no real action being taken to stop their closure. As we said in *Organise!* 30, the National Union of Mineworkers concentrated on mobilising 'public opinion' and going through the courts to stop the closures. This was designed to head off any direct action among miners and other sections of the working class in solidarity. Three months later, the situation has worsened and no further action has been taken by the NUM.

Since October, 16,000 out of the 40,000 workforce in the pits have left the industry in demoralisation. In the second week of June a further 3,000 redundancies were announced by the National Coal Board — this time among the white collar workers. Twenty pits have now been or will be advertised to the private sector — if there are no takers they will be shut. The pits closure programme continues. And this after huge demonstrations and widespread sympathy for the miners.

Scargill came out with a lot of hot air about solidarity action from other workers, in particular the railworkers, and then organised token one day stoppages. He and the rest of the NUM leadership hope this will mean not so many redundancies, if this can be used to negotiate a compromise. But it still means negotiation to let many redundancies go ahead, and this is exactly what has happened.

It is not a question of bad and inept generals leading the class war, it is the fact that the unions are not there to defend the interests of the working class. Action by workers outside the control of the unions, that is unofficial strikes and other mass action, can still save the day. As we said, miners cannot rely on Scargill and the NUM structure.

And at Timex...

A bitter struggle by workers at Timex in Dundee looks set to continue, despite the threatened closure of the plant. When Timex announced a lay-off of over half the 400 workers for up to 26 weeks, strike action took place straight away. On the first day a mass picket of over a hundred was mounted, in defiance of the law. The Timex workers didn't just picket the factory gate, they converged on the homes of scabs and pick-up points for scabs. From the word go, the strike has been determined and fired with enthusiasm, with women in the forefront. And from the word go, the engineering union, the AEEU, has worked to sabotage the strike. The strike has been characterised by regular mass meetings. At the first mass meeting, the AEEU stated that they suppported the need to lay-off. For them it was a question of who controlled the lay-offs. They were prepared to offer the bosses the ending of paid lay-offs, which had been established for a long time. They forced a return to work, accepting cuts in benefits and pensions, and wages frozen for a year. They argued that the best way workers could fight these attacks was individually through the courts.

But when the workers marched back to work they were met by a lock-out and the factory gate blocked by large numbers of police. Next day, all the workers, including those who had refused to strike, were sacked. Timex then advertised jobs with the new, shittier, conditions.

The Timex strike should not be dismissed as just a local strike. It represents the will of the boss class to bring about massive cuts in pay and deteriorating conditions in Britain. This is in line with the Tory determination not to sign the Social Chapter and to ensure that foreign investment in Britain can be attracted by the promise of less capital laid out on wages, holidays and provision of better working conditions. The strike continues with mass pickets and demonstrations and ferocious attacks on the strikers and their supporters. The determination of the strike forced Timex to sacrifice its local manager, Peter Hall. Now Timex has announced closure of the plant within six months, saying they will take workers back on during the run-down. This is a bluff, designed to end the strike. The union has connived at this, with the AEEU leader, Gavin Laird, stating that there were some — meaning the strikers — who were sabotaging a settlement. The strike will be defeated unless the workers break free of union control, and unless solidarity action is taken with other workers. Importantly solidarity must be international. We urge our readers abroad to help with this, to put pressure on Timex wherever they have plants or offices. *Organise!* salutes the magnificent women and men of the Timex workforce, fighters for our class.

Friends and neighbours

If you like what you read in *Organise!* you might be interested in these publications:

Counter Information. Quarterly newsheet produced by independent collective. Information on struggle worldwide. Free copy with SAE from Pigeonhole CI, c/o 11 Forth St, Edinburgh EH1, Scotland.

Subversion. Quarterly magazine of group of same name, with politics close to ours. Free copy from Dept 10, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HW.

Travellers, squatters and economic crisis

THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM has over the past century staggered from one crisis to another, lurching into imperialism, racism, nationalism and war when its more usual subtle deceptions become less effective in protecting the social hierarchy.

Recently, capitalists seem to be sailing up shit creek without a paddle, but in the West End's longest running farce, the Houses of Parliament, they seem more concerned with such apparently minor issues like travellers and squatters that 'blight' the lives of rural and urban dwellers than with their usual pretence of solving the economic crisis. Could it be that the state has finally acknowledged that it can't deal with the nightmare of the capitalist economy?

Of course not. The state has never been able to deal with the fundamental inequalities of capitalism, because the state itself is an integral part of this system. The state's job is, through the police, to stifle resistance and, through the media, education and 'popular culture', to direct resistance into 'legitimate channels' such as voting people into harmless institutions like Parliament, trade unions and pressure groups. The state may tinker with the system under pressure from mass struggle, but it will never make any fundamental changes. The Palace stays the same, only the guards change.

The immediate reaction to the governments' attention to squatters and travellers is that they are a thorn in the side of landlords and easy hate figures in a time of crisis. However, there is more to it than this.

The so-called 'Hippy Convoy' supposedly appeared in 1984. In fact it had been around for a lot longer; the Stonehenge festivals started in 1974. It's just that the media hadn't chosen to give them much attention. Despite the trashing of the travellers at Norstell Priory in 1984, in the Battle of the Beanfield in 1985 and again at Cholderton in 1986, the numbers of travellers have increased to around 10,000 as a result of homelessness, unemployment, inner city deprivation and general dissatisfaction with the rat race.

Harassment

The powers of the police have been widened to deal with the 'problem' and the police and local councils are happy to spend quite obscene amounts of money to harass squatters and travellers, removing them, often with considerable violence, from empty, unused houses and fields. Media hype and state-inspired bigotry have helped to ensure that the public have not protested.

The 1980s heralded a new era for British capitalism; it was to be leaner and fitter to make it more competitive in world markets. To do this the 'family silver' of Britain's nationalised industry was to be sold off so that the big corporations could buy up major capital assets like British Steel and BP. In other cases, like electricity and British Telecom, they were given licenses to print money and in the case of BA they were even paid money to buy! The leaner and fitter economy would also be a place of high unemployment. Before 1979, unemployment over three million supposedly meant revolution. But the state took the gamble because the stakes were high. High unemployment depresses wages and creates a large stock which the capitalists could use in times of strikes. Unemployment also reminds workers of what's possibly in store for them, especially if they step out of line.

Thanks to Alec Smart of Black & White and Green for photo.

Debt Cycle

Those who remained in employment were offered a piece of the action: the opportunity to buy their council houses at a knock down price or a dream home on easy credit. Thus, they too could be trapped in a debt cycle, spending their lives trying to pay off a mortgage and even more in dread of becoming unemployed.

Where do travellers and squatters fit into this? The answer is that they have said a collective 'up yours' to the state and have attempted to supply for themselves what they can't get from the system. The travelling lifestyle escapes the misery of mortgages, rent and bills, a crap job and city life. If all unemployed people took up this way of life, the reserve labour force would be eliminated and many capitalist hard-won victories would be undermined.

Squatting challenges two of the most sacred cows of capitalism: property and authority. Squatters challenge property by 'violating' the absurd 'right' of a landlord

to have an empty, unused building and they challenge authority by finding a home for themselves without waiting for the council or housing association to find them one while paying extortionate rent, or biding time in grim Bed and Breakfasts. If you don't play by the rules of private property, you are depriving some bloodsucker of rent or interest payments. Property must be protected over the interests of the homeless.

No anarchist would deny the naivety of those among the travellers who believe they can run away to the hills and forget the state, because we know that the state hasn't forgotten them. Nor will their actions bring about the downfall of capitalism. However, we should realise that travellers and squatters represent an attempt at autonomous social organisation and are a thorn in the side of capitalism and the state and thus should be supported.

JD

The above article was sent in by a comrade outside the ACF.

South Africa — Betrayal and compromise

THE COLUMNS OF both the establishment press and the left press were recently full of glowing testimonials to the murdered leader of the South African Communist Party and African National Congress, Chris Hani. We do not share their dismay. Hani prepared his own grave by the policies he and his party pursued. His murder shows the logical outcome of such policies.

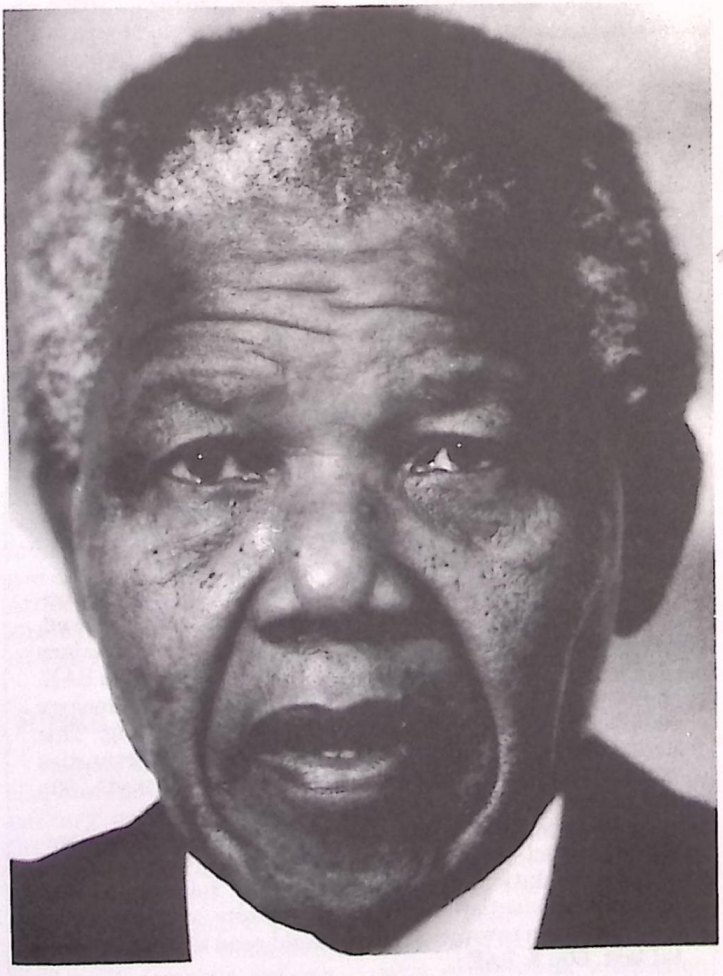
Hani was a son of a Transkei construction worker, becoming an active member of the ANC from 1957. He entered the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, in 1962. From then on he engaged in underground work, serving two years in prison. He became an active member of the South African Communist Party. In 1974 he was elected to the ANC executive, becoming Umkhonto chief of staff in 1982, and general secretary of the SACP in 1991.

As Umkhonto chief, he was responsible for the enforcement of the political line of the ANC and SACP leaderships.

In 1984, in the Umkhonto camps in Angola, a mutiny broke out. The rank and file were dissatisfied with the opulent lifestyles of the leadership, and the command that they be sent to East Germany to be trained, before being sent to help the MPLA regime in Angola against its UNITA rival.

The mutineers demanded that they stop fighting UNITA and transfer all their forces to fighting the South African regime. They also demanded an investigation of the ANC security apparatus, as well as an investigation of its activities and of the prison camp Quatro, which was nicknamed 'Buchenwald'.

Hani suggested that the mutineers form a committee to present their grievances to the ANC leadership. This committee negotiated a surrender of arms. After the surrender, Hani, along with one of the most corrupt Umkhonto leaders, Joe Modise, and an armed detachment, swept into the camp and began arresting mutineers, one of whom was shot in the back. He recovered and was sent to a labour camp, where he witnessed the torture and murder of hundreds of Umkhonto militants. Hani must at the very least have been aware of these atrocities, and, more likely, was directly involved in the crushing of dissent in the ANC ranks. He had become a brutal Stalinist thug, not the "lovely human being" described by Brian Bunting, another SACP leader (*Morning Star*, 20 April 1993). Come to think of it, remember the portrayal of Stalin as jovial Uncle Joe?



Left: Mandela has to make sure the struggle doesn't get out of control.

In 1989 Hani was confronted at ANC community meetings in Tanzania, which he himself had convened to explain the line of the leadership in relation to groups of people imprisoned by the ANC. He was challenged by the meetings and ex-mutineers. At one meeting at Dakawa he screamed from the platform that the decision on rehabilitation of mutineers could not be challenged: "The decision is unchallenged, it is an order from the National Executive Committee". He then ordered his security to arrest those who disagreed with the NEC decision, which was resisted by the mass of the meeting.

Assassination

It is likely that Hani was involved in the public assassination of Sipho Phungulwa in the Transkei in June 1990. This ANC militant had been involved in the 1984 mutiny and three weeks before his death had assisted at a press conference to anti-apartheid journalists, which revealed the suppression of the mutiny and the repression within the ANC. Former mutineers believed that Phungulwa was silenced because he knew too much, with his detailed knowledge of Umkhonto operations in the Transkei and his past job as Hani's bodyguard. He had also trespassed on Hani's territory, where he was setting up his own military fiefdom separate from that of Modise, the Umkhonto commander.

Hani had great ambitions. He hoped to inherit Mandela's mantle and become a future leader of South Africa. He had formed alliances with Winnie Mandela, in opposition to the Nelson Mandela group. Like all of the ANC and SACP leaders, he lived in a wealthy mansion. He had developed a reputation as a hero of the working class and of the armed struggle, a reputation which he had zealously cultivated himself. Since his elec-

tion as general secretary of the Communist Party, he had pushed for rapprochement with the Afrikaaner regime and for national unity. According to him the "oppressors in the past are actually talking to us and are showing readiness to negotiate for democratic elections". So oppression was now in the past, and the destabilisation that the regime was pursuing via assassinations, and the fostering and financing of Buthelezi's Inkatha, could be ignored. He was instrumental in sabotaging the mass struggles of the black South African working class, by his promoting of a way forward through 'democratic elections'. What he failed to take into account was that large sections of the regime were not prepared to relinquish power so easily. Whilst some elements were prepared to negotiate a democratic fix, in particular the capitalists, others, particularly in the armed forces and the secret police, were ready to plot and to murder. Political personalities close to the ANC, like David Webster and Anton Lubowski, had already been murdered. After the murder of Hani, popular anger against the regime burst onto the streets once more. Nelson Mandela attempted to control the crowds and was shouted down, after his calls for 'peace'. In Capetown and other cities, widespread rioting took place.

The role of the ANC and the SACP is to control mass anger and unrest seething in South Africa. The interests of the capitalists and the Stalinists are in close convergence. The future profitability of South African capitalism depends on the working class being weakened and demoralised.

And in the unions...

One of the major planks in the platform of ANC/SACP determination to spike the guns of popular discontent has been through the unions. For a brief period, the unions that developed in South Africa in the '70s during a period of workplace upsurge, appeared to be developing syndicalist and independent characteristics. The ANC and SACP targeted the union leaderships for recruitment so that now the unions are under their control. One symptom of this, but also of trade unionism in general, is what COSATU is doing with its funds. COSATU is the major trade union federation, with a membership of 1,300,000. It invested its pension and other funds in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange! COSATU set up their own unit trust, the Community Growth Fund, arguing that not only would it bring them profits, but that they could influence the behaviour of the big firms! So shares would not be bought with companies with a record of union-bashing, support for the 'homelands' and apartheid, or manufacture or selling harmful products. Big gold companies like Driefontein and tobacco giants like Rembrandts, were excluded from the list of shares to be bought.

Unions invest

The capitalists in South Africa are falling over themselves to get this investment. The world slump has affected South Africa's economy and made it stagnant. At the moment COSATU's fund is less than £10 million. But the capitalists know that this will increase considerably, and that black workers' money power is the most dynamic factor in an otherwise sluggish economy. We predicted in *Organise!* 23 that the unions would be vital in engineering a 'new deal' for the sake of capitalist profitability. We did not foresee that this would directly involve money from workers' pockets. As Tommy Olifant, chairman of the unit trust said recently: "Our aim is not to punish the companies but to change them". The aim of the ANC/SACP and their union adjuncts is not to overthrow capitalism, but to run it more efficiently. This will mean an all-out attack on any workplace and township self-organisation that has not been integrated into their apparatuses. Far from liberation for the great mass of black working people of town and country, what is in store is business as usual, that is continuing exploitation. They will have to continue to struggle, and this struggle will mean that they will have to break with the ANC and the ANC unions. The fall of apartheid will mean that the black working class will see that its so-called friends are in fact its enemies.

SOMALIA — colonialism by other means?

The sham of 'Operation Restore Hope'

SOMALIA IS AN occupied country. It is occupied by United Nations forces — in other words, by forces under the *de facto* command of the imperialist countries, particularly Washington. When, late last year, George Bush launched 'Operation Restore Hope ' — sending more than 20,000 US troops to Somalia under the guise of a 'humanitarian' effort to relieve a country ridden by famine, drought, and political strife — the politicians and media had, of course, dressed it up as a rescue operation: Somalis had been going hungry, UN forces would protect those who fed the Somalis.

Yet both the media and the then-President failed to mention that earlier US intervention had destabilised Somalia in the first place — that the US had pushed Somalia to make war on Ethiopia, and that this war had undermined the Somali regime and finally led to the break-up of the country. They also omitted to mention the vital economic and geopolitical 'interests' fuelling Bush's decision to send in US forces: that the 'pacification' of the East African nation protects the interests of four major American petroleum corporations with oil stakes in Somalia, as well as US global interests in Somalia as a strategic location providing military access to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. No, the media just said that Somalia was hungry and in chaos... and the US military, disguised as UN forces, would set it straight. Right now — even after the 'withdrawal' of American troops — there are 18,0000 foreign troops occupying Somalia in the strategic and oil rich Horn of Africa.

These underlying foundations for US military intervention in Somalia render 'Operation Restore Hope' indistinguishable from the 1991 US invasion of Kuwait to pro-

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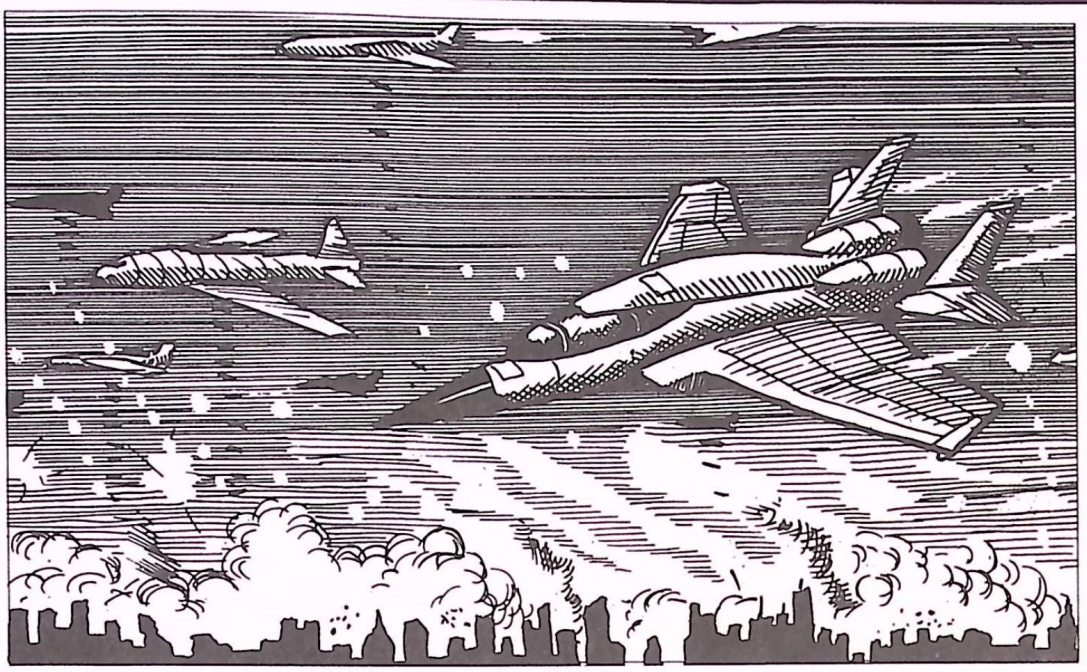


tect US oil and military interests in 'Operation Desert Storm', and go a long way towards explaining why, for example, on June 12th and 13th, US and other occupying troops, under the cover of the UN, launched a vicious bombing attack on the people of Mogadishu, massacring dozens of people who were peacefully marching to protest the occupation. This savage attack is described as the first phase of a long-term operation which will involve door-to-door searches, 4,000 US ground troops (supported by four warships, from the Persian Gulf) and continued air attacks by AC-130H 'Spectre' gunships and 'Cobra' attack helicopters. Large numbers of Somali citizens have now fled.

The guise of a 'humanitarian' mission has been revealed for what it is... colonial-type foreign occupation. The real goal of the US is to install a puppet government, supported by the brute force of invading troops, so the Pentagon can dominate the Horn of Africa and turn it into another strategic military base in the oil-rich Middle East.

Roots of occupation

Despite US influence over the economic, political and military policies of Somalia, the American media and the US government portray Somalia's ecological, political, ethical and economic crises as problems fuelled completely by Somali domestic policies, isolated from external influences. In reality, Somalia has a history of imperialist-imposed economic and political systems. Because European colonialism split ethnic Somalis into five states — French Somaliland (now Djibouti), Ethiopia, Kenya, Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland (which joined with Italian Somaliland to form Somalia in 1960 and which then seceded in 1991) — Somalia has been at the centre of most interstate conflicts as it tries to unite ethnic Somalis, especially in Kenya and Ethiopia, into one nation. Proceeding the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik's conquest of the Ogaden region (inhabited by ethnic Somalis) between 1887 and 1904, Britain and Italy established national borders separating Ethiopia and the area that is now Somalia without regard for ethnic or ecological divisions.

Somalia's present-day environmental and economic problems can be put down to colonialism. Throughout the 19th century, Britain and Italy imposed colonial systems of economic 'development' in Somalia. Britain commercialised Somalia's pastoral subsistence economy (based upon traditional nomadic herding) to produce surplus livestock to be exported to Aden, the capital of Yemen. Today, Somalia is still dependent on the export of livestock to sustain its economy: livestock consists of 46% of Somalia's Gross Domestic Production and 65% of its export earnings. The surplus of livestock production has resulted in overgrazing and desertification of Somali land, conditions which lead to conflicts between pastoralists over grazing and water rights and between pastoralists and farmers over access to rivers. Ecological degradation has also increased vulnerability to drought and famine.

Oil/military interests

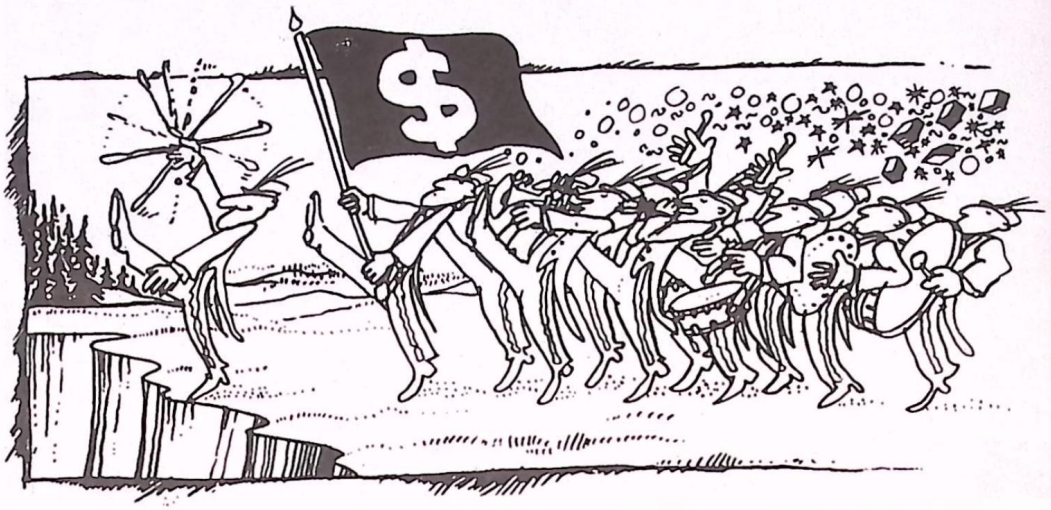
The four American oil giants Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips (and for a brief period Shell) — their interest heightened by the discovery by Hunt Oil of an estimated 1 billion barrels in oil reserves in the underground rift — began to obtain 'oil exploration licences' from the government of the pro-US dictator President Mohammed Siad Barre in 1986, and by the time of his overthrow in January 1991, already held the 'rights' to oil concessions amounting to 2/3rds of Somalia's land, which allowed the oil companies to explore and exploit potential oil reserves, particularly in northern Somalia. Today, because of Operation Restore Hope, the US military presence in Somalia safeguards the multi-million dollar investments in the region.

The close ties between Conoco and the US military further attests to the US oil interests underlying Operation Restore Hope. Conoco allowed US government officials to transform its corporate compound in Mogadishu into an American HQ. And yet the restoration of a stable government in Somalia is essential not only for the purpose of safeguarding US oil interests, but also to secure Somalia as a strategic military location commanding the Red Sea and to maintain US political clout over governing regimes in the Horn of Africa, which includes Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan.

For more than 30 years, the US poured military arms, worth approximately 1 billion dollars, into Ethiopia and Somalia. In the ten year period before the collapse of Barre's political authority in autumn 1989, the US government had given Barre's regime a total of $579 million in US arms transfers, consisting of military supplies. As one of the largest suppliers of weaponry to Barre, the US government helped to maintain Barre's political control in Mogadishu. Barre used the military arms provided by the US and other nations to suppress political dissent, both by directly suppressing clan-families which opposed his rule and by pitting rival clan-families against one another by supplying their militias with weapons. Through arms transfers and the 1990 'arms-for-bases agreement" between the US and Barre, the American government not only influenced the domestic politics of Somalia, but secured US political clout over Somalia and North-east Africa regions, as well as guaranteeing 'discretionary' rights over the use of Somali military facilities at Berbera and Mogadishu — locations from which the US government could serve as a 'watchdog' for the pro-West regimes in the Middle East and Northeast Africa, Western access to Middle Eastern oil, and commercial shipping routes from the West to the Indian Ocean. All of these US interests would be threatened by the takeover of the Horn of Africa by anti-US political/military powers.

A Somali writer in the *New Internationalist* a few months back wondered why all the key administrative and commercial posts in Somalia are held by foreigners and Somali ex-patriots, even when in many cases obviously less qualified and experienced than Somali citizens. Had she been able to see beyond that white-washing so spectacularly and hypocritically engineered by Western politicians and media, she might well have understood the reasons.

Beyond capitalism's core



CORE AND PERIPHERY are words used to describe a basic division in the map of the capitalist world between the so-called advanced capitalist countries and the developing countries.

We can all agree the whole world is dominated by capital, whether as a mode of production or by virtue of the capitalist world market which orders and controls forms of production which are not strictly capitalist Such words have been used to go beyond old terms such as 'Third World', which are derisory and lack any power of explanation. Important questions for revolutionaries in both the core and periphery concern their tasks as revolutionaries. In the hope of opening a debate between revolutionaries in capital's core and those in the periphery, I offer this article. Such debate will be important if there is to be convergence and co-operation of revolutionary groups internationally, which is prerequisite for a successful revolution.

A variety of Third Worldists, Trotskyists and Maoists have offered ideas about the importance of the working classes of the capitalist periphery in the revolutionary struggle. They have contrasted this with the tasks of revolutionaries in core countries, seeing the poor world as the tinder which will begin the transformation of the whole world. Such ideas began with Lenin who, following the failures of the industrial nations' working classes to make revolution, saw the revolutionary torch being passed to those areas which were less developed. This notion was particularly built upon by Mao and his followers. Unfortunately such rigid distinctions with working classes with vastly different forms of experience taking leading roles in the revolutionary struggle is idealistic and non-revolutionary. Keeping such struggles within national boundaries and only appealing to internationalism, not practising it, reasserts the capitalist world system by keeping alive the capitalist world market. I am of the opinion that a successful world revolution will only be built by unity or continuous convergence of revolutionary groups internationally and, consequently, a convergence of and co-operation in the class struggle.

The working classes (I use the plural to denote the fact that there are workers involved in both industrial and agricultural production) of the periphery suffer extremes of exploitation without any welfare state to fall back on. They are poorly paid, underemployed, they often have little chance of medical care, they suffer bad housing, poor education, poor food, and all manner of coercion and oppression. But this description can only be a gross generalisation. Each area of the periphery has its own relation to the capitalist global economy; consequently the working class in each area relates differently to the world class struggle. Despite these differences, though, there is only one enemy — capital — even if it is a hydra of many heads.

Let us look at a few examples to help us draw some conclusions.

Philippines

The Ramos regime has been in power now for nine months, having taken over democratically from the Aquino regime which followed the Marcos 'kleptocracy'. Marcos presided over the organised looting of the Philippine economy, amassing a fortune measured in billions of dollars and deposited all over the world. The Aquino 'yellow revolution' simply changed the faction of the bourgeoisie in power, but provided nothing for the long-suffering working class but fudge and indecision. Ramos now looks to be encouraging investment from the big Asian economies to replace dollars lost through the closing of US military bases. He hopes to solve a major problem of Filipino capital — power cuts — by a massive programme of generating expansion. Filipino workers are still faced with the same evils: a possible coup by the armed forces around General Honasau with 'promises' of clean government; a bourgeois élite which guards its political power and wealth; and continued poverty.

Brazil

Throughout March and April, from the south to the north east, the poor have taken direct action because of extreme needs. The landless peasants have marched to demand land. The landowners' response through their own organisation — the Ruralist Democratic Union — was that "invaders only respect bullets". The hungry have looted warehouses and supermarkets. The Workers' Party has simply talked about the urgent need for agrarian reform.

Last year President Collor was removed for widespread corruption. He was involved in the drugs trade and took huge kickbacks from industry for contracts. Much of this cash was funnelled through Florida. Through patronage the whole government became a 'kleptocracy' — a machine for theft. Known as the 'Alagoas Republic' after the province from where they all come, they managed to net over $1 billion.

All of this has come on top of a declining economy and a population which has doubled in 20 years. Its debt has tripled in that period to $118 billion. Urban income has fallen by 31% in ten years.

Brazilian workers face increasing poverty through a shrinking economy, a bankrupt public sector, massive national debt, continuing homelessness, unemployment and starvation. The boss class can only respond with the Bible, bullets or the ballot box to elect a new corps of kleptocrats or incompetents.

Egypt and Algeria

Both countries have deep problems. Corrupt and western-influenced ruling classes have only one interest: conspicuous consumption. Both bourgeois states have no capacity for pulling their countries out of economic decline. Egypt's liberal élite has more interest in internal squabbles and occasional brutal replies to fundamentalist atrocities. Similarly, the Algerian junta

which took over from the FLN has all of its predecessor's faults.

Algerian workers have to suffer 40% inflation and over 30% unemployment. The economy is in decline, particularly the state sector. Food prices have doubled. Housing is in short supply. The only credible response comes from the fundamentalists. The junta is seen as responsible for $27 billion debt which has led to a lack of much needed imports.

Revolutionary tasks

In each case I have given just a general sketch of differing areas of the periphery and what might be termed the semi-periphery. They each have a different reliance upon agrarian and industrial production for domestic use and for export. They each have a different form of integration into the capitalist world economy with different levels and forms of exploitation by international capital.

The tasks of revolutionaries depend upon how their material reality fits into the world economic system. The poor world is not homogeneous, exploitation is not a uniform process. These tasks depend upon the particularities of the class system; is it purely industrial working class, peasant or agrarian working class (not the same thing), does it involve significant numbers of dispossessed, or a mixture of these?

We can say that the economy of the poor world is subsumed under the interests of national and international ruling classes. These are the chief enemies. However, it is not always the case that their interests completely coincide.

Production is often for the international market, not for use. Therefore, the direction of revolutionary strategy should be towards 'production for use' as a slogan of regroupment, but 'production for use' under the control of workers.

Syndicalist forms which occur in many peripheral areas take militants into defence of the wage relation and so are anti-revolutionary.

Democratic and nationalist forms, also common, assert simply a new faction of the boss class as saviour. By remaining integrated into the world market, democracy and nation are the best camouflage for capitalism.

Religions and fundamentalist forms of response take workers into new forms of subjection, offering up humanitarianism and not class solidarity as a unifying force, again reasserting a new bourgeoisie with corporatist tendencies, incorporating greater sections of everyday life into ideological control.

All those forms of ownership which are not 'solidarity' forms should be attacked as slogans of regroupment.

The basis of organisation should stem from the community (in the territorial sense) and should seek to establish organised revolutionary strength across all sections of labour, creating bases of solidarity, opposing all forms of bourgeois recuperation, seeking regional, national and international coordination with one strategic slogan: to destroy each link in the international capitalist chain.

In each case the boss class, be it the national or international bourgeoisie, exploits and oppresses the working class. Where factions of the bosses are out of power or have no patronage deal with those in power, they seek to use the working class and its grievances to propel themselves into power. Without the active involvement of revolutionaries, the exploitation and oppression of workers can only be responded to by forces which are anti-revolutionary or recuperative. Syndicalism, nationalism, fundamentalism or social democracy can only take the workers of the periphery down the road of further misery.

So, hopefully the debate opens...

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Ex-Yugoslavia will the Allies intervene?

IN THE LAST issue of *Organise!* we described the reasons for US intervention in Somalia. But if the US has intervened in Somalia, as it did in Grenada and Panama, and as it did with its allies in the Gulf, why is it not taking action in the Balkans against the Serbian regime?

The fact is that the collapse of East European 'Communism' (read state capitalism) and the proclamation of a New World Order, celebrated with the blitzing of Iraq, has proved to be not such a glorious new epoch for the USA. With each new development of the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia, has come a new twist and turn of White House policy. Far from ensuring a problem-free world ripe for domination by the USA, the collapse of the Soviet bloc produced a whole new host of problems.

The election of Clinton strengthened the new approach of the USA to putting America first. This means the real likelihood of a trade war against its European allies. American policy in ex-Yugoslavia has been determined by this clash of interests with the European powers. As we said about Somalia, the US was consolidating its influence in the Horn of Africa at the expense of France, and so indirectly of France's ally, Germany. In ex-Yugoslavia, the German ruling class, along with that of Austria, aimed for the re-establishment of a German-dominated region, reaching from Poland to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Balkans. In order to establish this, they backed the declaration of independence of Croatia, Slovenia (where the regimes were pushing for market economies) and finally Bosnia.

Block

The USA opposed the recognition of these new states from the start. It backed Serbia and helped the Serbian strongman Milosevic survive against a massive anti-war movement that brought 200,000 out on the streets. It continued to block sanctions against Serbia that had been argued for by Germany and

"Yugoslavia's nice this time of year"

France. The USA was hoping for a deal with Milosevic that would ensure their interests in the region. That is why they have failed to intervene. Any arguments about the danger of a Vietnam-style war are a smoke screen. If the US wanted to, it could very quickly knock out Serb military headquarters, both in Serbia and among the Bosnian Serb militias. It could enforce sanctions that would bring Milosevic to his knees screaming for mercy. It could easily hamstring the actions of the militias.

The USA is now confused on what to do next. If it fails to arm the Bosnian Moslems, it will threaten its control over the Middle East, where sympathy for the Bosnian Moslems is strong. Saudi Arabia and Turkey will provide arms and soldiers if the USA is unwilling to do so, and this will damage the alliance with these local powers. On the other hand, strong action against Serbia will endanger America's ally Yeltsin in Russia. The Russian nationalists show great sympathy for the Serbs, through shared culture and blood. Any move by the USA will weaken Yeltsin's position and his attempts to push through a market economy in the ex-USSR. The Rus-

sian nationalists would whip up pro-Serbia sentiments in Russia and overthrow Yeltsin. This would lead to a further disintegration of the Russian federation compared to which the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia would be a like a game of marbles.

Unification

As for Germany, military intervention has been blocked by the situation at home. The unification of Germany was greeted with glee by the West German ruling class. Now, however, the working class in the East is taking militant action to gain wage parity with their fellow workers in the West. The cost of unification has proved to be much higher than was predicted. Kohl has been forced to raise taxes to pay for this and the German working class is paying for the cost through lay-offs and sackings. The German state is now pre-occupied with internal problems and military intervention is not now a priority.

It seems now that the Western powers would prefer to let Serbia and Croatia carve up Bosnia between them, as agreed via the Vance-Owen deal. This comes after much cant about how the Bosnian Muslims would be protected. In order of priority, the Western powers prefer to back Yeltsin than they do the Islamic states. Meanwhile the strife whipped up by both the big Western powers and the Croat, Serbian and Muslim politicians and warlords has claimed the lives of a quarter million people, not to mention the large numbers maimed, mutilated and raped in the conflict. Anyone with any human feeling is horrified and depressed by the civil war in Yugoslavia. Two years ago, workers throughout Yugoslavia were striking against economic attacks on their standard of living, whether they were Serb, Croat, Muslim or Albanian. The bestial civil war has buried all of this, just as it has buried the vast movement against war in Serbia at the beginning of the conflict.

Resistance

The press in the West have been keen to get over the awful situation in ex-Yugoslavia. This strengthens the feeling of depression, cynicism, fear of struggle and the idea that nothing can be done to change things as they are. We have reported in the past on movements of resistance throughout ex-Yugoslavia. These are continuing, both among Croat and Serb conscripts. In Kragujevac, 6,700 reservists reported for duty without their weapons, locked themselves in the military camp and refused to go to the front. In Valijevo 200 reservists returning from the front sat in in front of district government offices and forced the commander to agree that they were now discharged. On the front at Markutsica 700 reservists refused to continue soldiering once their 45 days of duty were over. A general ordered their officers arrested but backed down when soldiers aimed their rifles at him. Two weeks later, 150 Belgrade reservists were allowed to return from the front after a three-day hunger strike.

Where individuals have acted alone to resist the war they have been forcibly drafted or imprisoned. Where people have acted collectively, they have gained some concessions.

A revulsion against the war can lead to movements to overthrow the new regimes throughout ex-Yugoslavia. All is not lost, despite what the Western media says. As part of the tiny revolutionary minority, we will continue to denounce the plague of nationalism in all its forms and remind people of their real class interests and class solidarity. We will continue proudly to hold high the black and red banner of internationalism and struggle for a world without frontiers and war, a world without masters and without exploitation.

Natural laws or capitalist ideology?

IN THIS ARTICLE I want to describe and give a critique of the ideological views of the three 19th century 'natural scientists' and show how to some extent they were all influenced by an underlying capitalist worldview. They are: TR Malthus (1766-1844), an English economist and demographer who is still famous/infamous for his population catastrophe theory; Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the English zoologist known for his theory of evolution; and Karl Marx (1818-1883), the German economist/political scientist who developed a critique of capitalism. In particular, I want to examine the so-called 'natural laws' each is famous for.

Malthus and over-population

Thomas Malthus is famous for his *Essay on the Principle of Population* published in 1798. Specifically writing about human population size he wrote that population tends to increase faster than food supply with inevitable disastrous results unless population increase can be reduced, either by moral restraint or by 'positive checks' which include war, disease, famine, accidents etc. He tried to show that if unchecked population would increase geometrically (in a series such as 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 ...) but that food supplies would only increase arithmetically (in a series such as 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 ...). He saw the problem as one caused by and affecting primarily the lower classes.

Malthus' ideas were wrong and have been thoroughly trashed from all sides for two centuries. But they still keep cropping up. Why? Firstly, though, we need to consider why he was wrong. He was proved wrong by history. Between 1800 and 1830 the population of Great Britain grew from 15 to 28 million without the predicted disaster, as agriculture expanded at the same rate. Basically, new technology such as new ploughs and crop rotation and a more capital-intensive agriculture was brought about by the enclosures. World population has seen similar dramatic growth in the centuries since, but agriculture has managed to keep up. The fact there are still famines and massive hunger is a problem caused by capitalist distribution rather than Malthusian logic.

The fundamental reason why Malthus is wrong is that he fails to take into account the capitalist system. Over-population is not what keeps the lower classes poor. It is the maldistribution of resources inherent in capitalism. However many people share however many resources, the minority rich get the bulk and the majority poor get the leftovers.

Another fault from a political/moral/ethical standpoint is Malthus' view that radical population control is a positive and beneficial thing (for the survivors!). Its ultimate expression, so far, was reached in the fascistic population strategies in 1930s Europe. The Nazi policy of *lebensraum* was based on the desire to make more 'living room' for the German race, by exterminating their Eastern neighbours as well as those who didn't deserve to live (Jews, gypsies, gays, the mentally handicapped).

Despite Malthus being so wrong on so much, his ideas have a recurring popularity. In particular I notice the anarchistic 'deep ecologists' of Earth First! pay much attention to the 'over-population' problem. In fact, up to November last year, one of their bumper sticker slogans was "Malthus was right". Though the present world population size, growth and density need urgent discussion, Malthusianism is not the way forward. His 'natural laws' of the spatial limits to population growth are not just wrong but also dangerous. Without a clear anti-capitalist analysis, the over-population arguments can soon lead to misanthropy (hating all humans), racism and fascism.

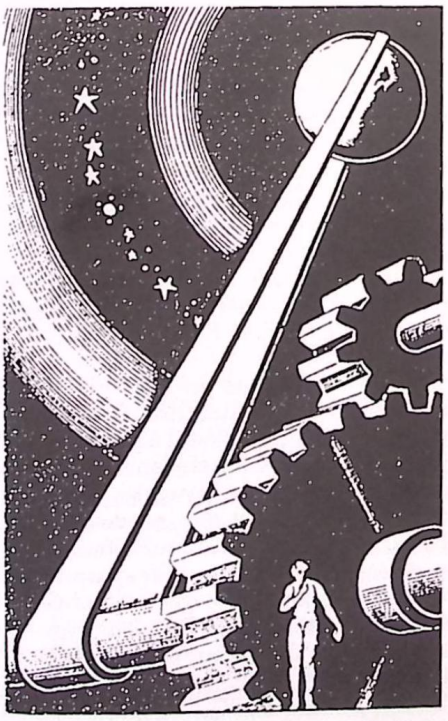
Human beings are no longer subject to the same fluctuations in population that we find in the animal and plant world. To some extent

human civilisation has created a cultural and social line of evolution of our own. People can have an appallingly destructive or a profoundly constructive impact on economic relations, forms of communication, political institutions, cities and technologies. What we have now is a worldwide capitalist system leading us to the brink of disaster. However, there is no 'natural law' that this must happen. We have the ability to overthrow capitalism and create an ecological society.

Darwin and natural selection

Charles Darwin was a geologist and a natural scientist, a student of the history of life. He is famous for his theory of evolution first propounded in 1859 in his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. There are two main facets to his theory. Firstly, all life on this planet has evolved from a single source by a process of evolution over a period of many millions of years. Secondly, all individual life forms and species are in a ruthless competition to survive. He thought it 'natural' that given this competition, a superior being would dispossess an inferior. This 'law' of 'survival of the fittest' was the process by which evolution occurred.

It was the first part of his theory that attracted all the hostility, because it directly challenges the religious view of creation. The second part, however, was fully in line with the dominant capitalist ideology of the time, even giving capitalism a 'natural law' status. Andrew Carnegie, a leading capitalist of the time, immediately embraced this concept, writing "... the law of competition, be it benign or not, is here; we cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found; and while the law may sometimes be hard for the individual, it is best for the race because it ensures the survival of the fittest in every department". Is Darwin correct? Is 'survival of the fittest' a 'natural law'? Or is it part of an ideological fantasy?



With the advance of 20th century science we now know that Darwin's view of common descent is correct. With the discovery of both genetics and DNA, we see a commonality to all life forms now existing, as well as to all those who have ever existed on this planet. The chemical language of life is identical in all organisms. The same work has also confirmed that each individual organism is unique. Genetic variation and the passing down of those genes to offspring show how the basis for evolution takes place. But is the process of that evolution a competitive one as Darwin claimed?

Co-evolution

For a long time the process of co-evolution has been known and is seen to be fairly common. For example, when a new species of fly pollinates a new species of orchid, there is no competition between flies. The agent of evolution may be natural selection, but the selector is not a competitor and the birth of a new species is not tantamount to a death sentence for the old. In order for Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest' to be correct, it must show that any new species develops out of the old one in competition with each other. The extinct species has lost the battle of survival with its superior descendant. This is not the case in the process of co-evolution. Hence a kingpin of Darwin's theory has always been known to be false. Why then has Darwinism been so uncritically accepted?

The ideological construct underlying the concept of 'survival of the fittest' is clear; that each new species is better than the one before because it won the struggle for life in direct competition with its predecessor. It is clear that of the present species on earth it is the human being that has been given the status of 'highest life form'. And within human society, certain groups of humans are given higher status than others. For example, even the title of Darwin's book suggests that some races of human beings are more favoured than others. This ideology is thus seen clearly as the same old hierarchical worldview that the ruling classes have always pushed: the pyramidical structure with the bosses on the top. With the onset of modern capitalism, the religious basis to justify that pyramid became a scientific one. It's 'natural law'! This then is why capitalist society has always touted Darwinism and ignored any minor evidence that would contradict it.

Modern scientific knowledge enables us critically to examine the history of life on this planet and see how it 'fits' Darwinist logic. It soon becomes clear that it doesn't fit at all! The basis for evolution, if it followed Darwinist 'laws', would be a Malthusian pattern of population growth and check. Darwin owed his idea of a spatial limit to the number of species to Malthus' idea about the spatial limit to population growth. If the world were following the above logic we would expect to see the following pattern of speciation and extinction: an increase in number of species and then an increased struggle for survival followed by extinction of the 'weaker' species. However, this is not the pattern seen. In fact, the most major events in world evolution have seen the exact opposite: extinction and then speciation. These major events are the mass extinctions that we now know to have happened regularly in world history, the most famous being the event that wiped out the dinosaurs 63 million years ago.

Despite the increasing amount of scientific evidence in fields such as geology, the 'survival of the fittest' dogma goes unchallenged because of the ideological link between Darwinism and the capitalist façade that dominates our lives. As anarchist communists we should be clear in condemning such 'natural laws'.

Here is a section of an essay entitled 'Spontaneity and Organisation', by Murray Bookchin, that gives a different approach to the idea of evolution.

"Ecology denies that nature can be interpreted from a hierarchical viewpoint. Moreover, it affirms that diversity and spontaneous development are ends in themselves, to be respected in their own right. Formulated in terms of ecology's 'ecosystem approach', this means that each form of life has a unique place in the balance of nature and its removal from the ecosystem could imperil the stability of the whole. The natural world, left largely to itself, evolves by colonising the planet with ever more diversified life forms and increasingly complex interrelationships between species in the form of food chains and food webs. Ecology knows no 'king of beasts'; all lifeforms have their place in a biosphere that becomes more and more diversified in the course of biological evolution...."

Karl Marx and history

One of the cornerstones of Marxist ideology is the idea that the transitions from primitive communal society through societies based on slavery, feudalism and then capitalism, are both progressive and revolutionary. In addition, the inevitable evolutionary process will lead from capitalism to communism via a transitional socialist society. These transitions are progressive because they develop 'man's' potential to increase the productive forces and control the natural world.

Marx saw the historical process of recent human history as obeying 'natural laws' similar to the way Darwin viewed the history of evolution. In fact, just two years after the publication of *On the Origin of the Species*, Marx was to write, "Darwin's book is very important and it suits me well that it supports the class struggle in history from the point of view of natural science."

Marx followed the logic of Darwin in arguing that what exists now is better than what came before, given the laws of competitive natural selection and evolution. He saw the evolution of human societies as exactly analogous to the evolution of the species and believed that the future of human society is already determined based on our understanding of the past. As with many other 19th century ideologues, he then tried to solidify his theory as 'natural law' using a pseudo-science. It was all of course nonsense. However, it still has an incredibly strong appeal because it ties in closely with the capitalist 'common sense' outlook which similarly expresses the benefits of competitive natural selection for human society. In addition, the inevitability of communism must clearly appeal to any uncertainty in revolutionaries.

Underpinning this Marxist world-view is the idea that human society must 'dominate nature'. This is also the ideology of the capitalist ruling class. Both groups believe the natural world is simply an object for the use of humans. Hence, Marx saw the domination of nature as an objective, historical imperative, emerging directly from the idea that class society was an historical, unavoidable evil. Capitalism is a progressive stage in history, providing the historical conditions for human liberation by increasing productive forces on an unprecedented scale and conquering nature.

Just to make clear that this Marxist world-view is still alive and kicking, here is a quote from the political platform of the Communist Bulletin Group (British left communists) published in 1991. "Capitalism, up to the end of the 19th century, despite all its appalling exploitation and horrific conditions, was progressive. It created a world-wide social system, created a world-wide revolutionary class and developed technology and man's control over the environment to the point where all mankind's material needs can be potentially met..."

As libertarian/anarchist communists we must fundamentally reject this view. The Marxist view of nature is not based on historical or natural laws as they would have us believe. Instead it can be seen to grow out of the same warped tradition as Malthus and Darwin, whose ideas prop up the capitalist system.

Many of the ideas in this article have been taken from the writings of the American social ecologists, especially Murray Bookchin, who argues for the creation of a genuinely ecological society and the development of an ecological sensibility that deeply respects the natural world and the creative thrust of natural evolution. Clearly to do this requires the complete eradication of capitalism and other hierarchical social relations as well as the idea that humans are 'above nature' and that nature is there for us to plunder. Instead, humans are one part of a whole and all life is mutually interdependent. The ideologies of human supremacy, based either on God's laws or Darwin's 'natural science', together with Marxism, need now more than ever to be finally dumped in the dustbins of history.

Books worth reading include:
Defending the Earth, A Dialogue between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman. The ideas of Murray Bookchin on ecology, over-population and Marxism are particularly clear.
The Great Dying, Cosmic Catastrophe, Dinosaurs and the Theory of Evolution by Kenneth J Hsu. An easy to read account of the scientific flaws in Darwinism.

Anarchists meet in Ireland

ON THE WEEKEND of 19/20 June the comrades of the *Organise!* class struggle anarchist group hosted a summer camp on the sunny North Antrim coast. Present alongside *Organise!* members from Belfast, Bangor and Ballymena were a number of comrades from the Dublin branch of the Workers Solidarity Movement, an observer from the British anarcho-syndicalist Direct Action Movement and two observers from the London group of the ACF.

Over the course of the weekend, discussions, formal and informal, took place concerning a wide range of topics. On the Saturday a comrade from *Organise!* presented a discussion paper on 'The Poverty of Statism' which sparked off an interesting discussion on the relationship between the State's role as the executive power of the ruling class and capitalist development.

Later the same day, all four organisations present talked briefly (or not so briefly!) about the activities and perspectives of their respective groups. A member of *Organise!* outlined the history and evolution of their group since its original inception in 1985 and its subsequent rebirth in 1991. The WSM likewise briefly sketched its origins and activity. The DAM comrade gave a comprehensive account of an ongoing workplace struggle in which they were involved and also defended the DAM strategy of building industrial networks as a basis for creating anarcho-syndicalist unions. An ACF member delivered a paper on the role of revolutionary organisation and the necessity of workers' self-organisation outside trade union structures.

There followed a lively discussion on the nature of permanent economic organisations of the working class. Whilst all participants believed that workplace activity by libertarian revolutionaries was essential, disagreement as to how we should relate to the unions was clear.

Discussions continued in a slightly lighter vein in the pub that evening and of course the disciplined revolutionaries present were careful not to be hung-over for the following morning's session on Ireland. A talk given by an *Organise!* member concerned 'Loyalism and the Protestant Working Class'. The ensuing discussion focused upon the nature of working class loyalism, the emergence of 'Ulster Nationalism' amongst the Loyalist camp and the prospects for the development of class politics in the Six Counties. A discussion also took place concerning the nature of imperialism with the WSM criticising the anarchist movement in Britain for failing to use specific 'anti-imperialist' arguments with reference to Ireland. The ACF members present argued that whilst we support immediate withdrawal of British troops (or any other troops that in some scenario might replace them, ie Irish, UN), the only coherent "anti-imperialism in a totally integrated world economy is anti-capitalism". However we agreed with the WSM that the anarchists in Britain had failed really to put Ireland on their agendas.

Overall, the weekend's discussions, fraternal and open, were positive and educational. Hopefully regular meetings such as these will facilitate better links and co-operation between Irish and British class struggle anarchists. In future editions of *Organise!* (ACF) we hope to carry contributions from both *Organise!* and the WSM.

In the meantime the *Organise!* group is continuing internal discussions on political and organisational direction whilst working to disseminate anarchist ideas and supporting local struggles such as the campaign to resist the rundown of the Royal Victoria hospital in Belfast.

Comrades wishing to keep up to date with developments or get hold of *Organise!* Irish Anarchist Bulletin can subscribe: one year's supporting subs £5, cheques, POs to *Organise!*, 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast 1 1JQ.

We've been flooded with letters so cannot include everyone. We promise to put them in the next issue. Keep on writing!

Timex

Dear *Organise!*

For far too long, bosses have been able to get away with attacks on workers' rights. Peter Hall, the manager of Timex, thought he could get away with anything. But he was new to Dundee, and he reckoned without the stubbornness of Dundee women. The Timex workers, with women in the front of the struggle, have set an example of spirited defiance to us all. They sing songs on the picket line, mostly new words to traditional tunes. One of the songs is 'Can you Hear the Scabbies Sing?', to which the answer is a resounding "NO!"; the scabs have no songs because they are slaves, crawling to work on the slavemasters' terms.

The defiant Timex workers are an example to us all. But they can't win on their own. They need the solidarity of the working class. My son, his mother and myself were at the rally in the City Square on the 20th of March and we heard the representatives of the Timex workers call for as many people as possible, from near and far, to get down to join the picket on the following Monday morning.

So when people like the Lord Provost of Dundee and Euro-MP Henry McCubbin talk about "outside agitators" and "infiltration", they are lying. The truth is that there was no 'infiltration' — there was an open, and welcome, response to an open invitation. I saw the sheer delight on the faces of some of the Timex women at the fervour of the demonstration supporting them.

There was no 'agitation' — the actions of Peter Hall provided all the agitation necessary. As for being 'outside', we were acting as part of the working class. It is people like the Lord Provost and Henry McCubbin who are outside that. "Let cowards flinch and traitors sneer."

Naturally, most of the people arrested and charged were from outside Dundee. That was a deliberate policy by the politically motivated police force. Such 'divide and rule' tactics must not be allowed to succeed. We defeated Maggie Thatcher. We defeated the poll tax. We can defeat Peter Hall and John Major, too.

DC
Montrose

God

Dear *Organise!*

A couple of observations about your God article in issue 30. At the start you say: "You can usually find some saving grace in any religion. Islam for example stresses community solidarity, Christianity love of our fellow (sic) human beings, whilst Buddhism has concern for every living creature, and so on."

None of these things is a 'saving grace'. 'Community solidarity' means solidarity with local business, local exploiters, local leaders. Community solidarity (in any society which isn't anarchist communist) is the negation of working class solidarity and consciousness. 'Love of our fellow (sic) human beings' and 'every living creature' means love of our bosses, our exploiters, our class enemies. I'm afraid there are no 'saving graces' in any religion.

Secondly, what is beautiful about symbols of mystification and oppression like the mosques of Isfahan, the murals of Ajunta and frescos in the Sistine Chapel? I'm sure these unhealthy places will be destroyed by the revolutionary proletariat in the future, and a good thing too!

In the last paragraph you say: "The psychological comfort it gives has to be weighed against the damage it does" — surely you can't find anything positive in your so-called 'psychological comfort' of religion.

We can't go around implying religion would be alright if it was non-sexist or more tolerant, or (like Judaism) didn't aim to convert the world. The real issue is that all religions support a class, or hierarchical, society, not just that they do philosophical or physical 'damage' to people.

Religion is a tool of the ruling class used to maintain or expand our subservience, this is the reason workers need to piss on it.

Pete, BM Makhno, London

Author of article replies: The failure by Pete to gain any pleasure from religious art and architecture etc, is his serious loss. Despite religion's use of imagery to 'mystify' and 'oppress' the masses, the creative genius of humanity is often greater than the meanness of popes, mullahs and rabbis. Despite stifling dogma and bureaucratic pettiness, which permeate most official religions, the human will to freedom of expression often overcomes the limitations.

As regards 'saving graces' the point here was to allude to the fact that, despite each and every religion being a poisonous mixture of myth and nonsense, again human nature cannot be totally overridden. Some concession has to be made to our natures even if it is to act ultimately as an agent of oppression. I agree, religion is in no way a substitute for liberation.

The point about 'psychological comfort' is to restate the argument about the "opium of the people" made by some 19th century German. I can't find much that is positive in religion, unfortunately millions of people do. Incidentally, simplistic and ignorant sweeping statements such as "religions inevitably support class or hierarchical society" may sound ultra-revolutionary but are not based upon fact. Most religions do support the status-quo, some do not.

Finally, we may not be discussing the same article. Mine was an attack on religion, a point which Pete in his ultra-radical purity seems to miss.

The trade union issue

Dear *Organise!*

The most sensible way of approaching the whole issue of the unions is to relate it to current events and trends. The argument over the unions and the syndicalist approach has continued for many years and there always seem to be enough partisans for each side of that argument to keep it bubbling.

There are a number of disputes brewing or on the boil but can we say that the working class is at all combative, is there a sense of the class coming together to take on its enemies? No! All we see are rearguard actions of divided workforces embattled and tired after years of Tory attack.

In the case of the railworkers we see the union bosses applying a strategy of piecemeal action, one day strikes and intense negotiations. They are simply using the industrial strength of their unions' workers to impress upon rail management their need for the active involvement of the union bureaucracy. Hence we see the idea of the 'Better Rail Campaign', a public relations exercise.

There are all manner of public sector disputes going on. Here we see sectoralism at its worst. Support is garnered from the public for each proposed or actual loss in service. Each dispute is promoted as being singular, although within a wider current of cuts. The unions are not fighting any offensive action, simply a defensive campaign, complaining about imported coal and an energy policy set to decimate their ranks in both pits and jobs. The only recent dispute to take up an offensive strategy has been the Timex dispute. In each case, be it Jimmy Knapp or sad King Arthur, union hierarchies are following a course of limited and divided action. By limiting workers' actions they are both proving that they are 'responsible' leaders, not trying to break the system which feeds them. These are skirmishes rather than battles. By keeping disputes divided, sectoral rather than generalised, they reinforce the image of responsibility. If they were to allow disputes to link and generalise they would lose their own intimate links with employers and the ultimate employer: the government. For those who are the head and the face of the unions: the bosses, the workers and the membership remain the body, the arms and the legs as they supply the union's motive power, its strength and survival.

Unions may well be organisations which involve large sections of the class, but they are of the same order as the businesses themselves. There is no major difference between a union and a personnel department; they are all simply mechanisms of negotiation, dealing with pay, conditions and, increasingly, redundancy. The responsibility of union leaders is only superficially to their members; by virtue of their position and function their interests lay elsewhere. The future of the class lies outside of the unions, creating its own strategies and its own forms of organisation.

Our task as revolutionaries must be to agitate for and make public alternatives to this whole process — alternative strategies and forms of organisation, the simple idea of unity in struggle. For example: The creation of the idea of a Workers' Co ordination:

- To be available for sponsorship by a number of organisations (such as ACF, Subversion) and individuals as yet unaligned but within the revolutionary camp.
- To promote the idea of local groups and initiatives. Unemployed workers' groups, claimants' groups, public sector coordinations, service user groups, support groups, to be united in local workers' assemblies.
- To attract all those hit by cuts, council tax rises, claimants, unemployed, all those in dispute etc.
- To make plain their common interests and common struggle in order to promote a unified movement of mass struggle organised through workers' assemblies behind a common platform sponsored by revolutionaries, producing its own propaganda, disseminating information on all workplace struggles, cuts etc, looking for a common programme of action.
- To expose and struggle against every diversion such as union resolutions, reference to union and labour leaderships, union limited action and instead to encourage self-activity and self-direction of struggle.
- To oppose new unions, union reform campaigns, any reference to mediation between workers in struggle and bosses.

Solidarity should go beyond supporters aiding single struggles, but should be the convergence of all into a unified move-

ment, including those directly affected and those in support of it.

JC (Sheffield)

Culture

Dear *Organise!*

Despite the huge influence culture has on our lives, anarchist publications contain little or no coverage or analysis of films, theatre, music, literature etc, content to ignore cultural activities so as to get on with the more heavyweight subjects of strikes, new world orders etc, letting the capitalist press set the cultural agendas.

There have been few incursions or much support by organised anarchists into the cultural arena. It is left to a few creative libertarians who can be claimed retrospectively if they make some impact.

Well we can be grateful for your article on music. Good music has power and is a 'liberating' factor. Undoubtedly one of the most influential times in bringing anarchist ideas to vast numbers of people was during the punk era. With punk everyone associates the Sex Pistols (pop punk) although I would argue that a band like Crass (political punk) had a deeper and more long-term influence even though they rarely get a mention in the history of music. As anarchists their music and lyrics were far more revolutionary than bands of that era. Even today in loyalist Belfast estates you will see the name of Crass or their logo scrawled in defiance on some gable wall.

To cite John Cage as being in the frontier of music is pretentious bourgeois crap. His works may have had a theoretically correct line but in reality his music is unbearable. Citing his silence track as revolutionary is silly. One track of Crass's LP was total silence, not because of some obscure theory but because their manufacturers refused to press it because the song blasphemed.

Today there are amazing bands who are producing truly revolutionary music which would blow the socks off old folk agitprop forever whining on about the evils of capitalism.

In your article you say that technological capitalism has alienated many people from production of music. This is nonsense. More people than ever are producing music thanks to cheap technology. Witness the charts over the past few years, fast disappearing are the superstars, today they're dominated by unknown young kids producing No.1 records from their bedrooms using inexpensive equipment.

Magazines like yours should highlight new records, pirate radio stations play them, and alternative record shops distribute them. They are as valid as ideas in pamphlets and books.

In recognising the importance of culture we can combat the messages of the global entertainment industry.

All the best,

RO'S (Belfast)

Editor's reply: *Organise!* comes out quarterly. With so much going on in the world there are always problems with deciding what to put in each issue. Obviously, if we were weekly or daily (speed the day!) we would have much more coverage of films, plays, records, literature. If we had the resources and numbers we might even produce a magazine devoted to cultural issues. Our limited coverage of culture is not due to lack of interest or reluctance to deal with culture, but purely to lack of space. As regards Cage's music being unbearable, well that's a matter of taste, and some might find punk unbearable. The writer of the article intended to deal with all categories of music. Limiting the article to an examination of punk would have made it far too narrow. Anyway, point taken. Future issues will look at cinema, literature and art.

Dear ACF,

I feel that all lefty groups, even the ACF, have a 'holier than thou' attitude to fascism/racism. I am white, young, unemployed, angry, and working class and used to be in the army. In the mid-1980s I used to be very racist/fascist because I was sick to the back-teeth of being unemployed or on a low wage and the BNP/NF told me and white lads in similar circumstances that immigrants were the cause of all the problems faced by the white working class. I am not proud of being a former racist/fascist and contributing to the spiral of racial violence and terror in this country, but if you just kick the shit out of fascists without sympathising with the problems that led to them becoming racist you will never defeat fascism.

If you don't understand and counter the reason why white working class turn to fascism it will grow and grow in this country and we will be in deep shit. White working class lads turn to fascism because of ignorance. If you educate us about blacks' culture etc, then you will destroy the BNP's ability to recruit from a pool of ignorant, angry, impoverished white working class lads.

Less of the high and mighty slogans like Smash the Fash. This aggravates the alienation of white working class racist youths and does not solve the problem. Education by down to earth lefties in the fascist strongholds (Belvedere, Bexley Heath, Brick Lane etc) is the best way to defeat the menace of fascism/racism.

Personally I feel that I have more in common with half the BNP who are at least working class unlike most people in left-wing groups (ACF, SWP, RCP, RCG, etc) who tend to be middle-class and theoretical in their politics and not from the same world the working class live in.

But be optimistic about defeating fascism. I was at the Bloody Sunday march which was attacked by 500 BNP and I didn't see a single skinhead on their side — only Anti Fascist Action skinheads! The ability of the BNP to break into the mainstream of white working class culture is limited, as most of us listen to black music, have black mates and ain't as ignorant as our predecessors in the '70s who led to the rise of the NF! Me and Tim Scargill of Class War are both ex-racist fash which just shows that people can change. When I was a hate filled racist fascist lager lout in the '80s I despised all lefties as middle class students and rich pompous arrogant scum. Now I know different.

Keep up the good work ACF!

FK (East London)

Editor's reply: First of all, you make a mistake in listing us with the parties and groups of the Leninist left — we have nothing to do with the Left, who are a part of the capitalist problem not the solution. Secondly, we find it tedious to have to prove our working class credentials. The ACF is a working class organisation but open to all who sincerely support revolutionary politics whatever their class origin. Yes, we value the development of theory, but since when was that the property of the middle classes? Everybody thinks, therefore everyone has the ability to develop theory. If you think the BNP is a working class organisation, then you're making a big mistake. Its leadership, as with that of the NF in the '70s, is made up of small businessmen and other petty bourgeois. The fact it is recruiting to a limited extent among the white working class does not mean that it is not like all fascist organisations, deeply anti-working class in theory and practice.

We've always felt that fascism has to be fought on both the physical level and at the level of ideas. (See our review of Joe Jacobs book *Out of the Ghetto, Organise!* 26.) We're glad to hear that you've broken with racism and fascism. This proves the anarchist communist argument that people can change and move to revolutionary positions, and that many can be won away from reactionary ideas.

Poor Lenin. Extracts from the 'Communist Technique in Britain' by Bob Darke. Irate Press. £1 from AK Distribution, 22 Lutton Place, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8.

In 1952, when *The Communist Technique in Britain* was first published, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was already in terminal decline. Membership had reached a peak of 64,000 in September 1942, but a decade later "the political party of the workers" had retrenched to a membership of 35,000. CPGB propagandists would have us believe this decline was due wholly to external influences — all conveniently out of their sphere of influence. But Darke's book confirms that the CPGB fouled its own doorstep; and that the contemptible manner in which its own activists were treated was a not insignificant factor. Many workers joined the CPGB with honest revolutionary intention, and it can't be realistically argued that the CPGB, at least at the street level, was a hive of rotten bureaucratic careerists, lackeys and sycophants. Indeed, the Party's formation in 1920 was built upon a genuine hatred of the horrendous poverty-ridden condition of the working class.

But the transformation to a revolutionary organisation could not be effected by mimicking bourgeois political parties, and if any sole cause was to blame, it was this. Indeed such structures *par excellence* are only ideal for the estrangement of the more active members into a leadership clique. Leninism effectively drove a wedge further still into this division of political labour, and with its internal emphasis upon 'democratic centralism' — doublespeak for doctrinal rigidity, intolerance, persecution of dissent, and stony asceticism — is it really little wonder that such a 'revolutionary' organisation degenerated into the antithesis of what it is? We have to keep in mind that all this was to justify a doctine in which the final victory of socialism was assured by virtue of the leadership guided by science, exploiting the contradictions of an imperialist system in permanent crisis. Where was this leadership to get this guidance from? Why, of course, from the 'first land of victorious socialism', ever ready and willing to provide such guidance — which, incidentally, always was in complete harmony with Soviet Cold War machinations.

It's worth reading this pamphlet, if only to gain an insight of an individual caught at the sharp end in the authoritarian communist nightmare. More than this though, the pamphlet is a warning. Trotskyism shares the same ideological master as Stalinism did, along with its sick 'values'.

Revolutionaries must learn the invaluable lessons of history, and not repeat the mistakes. Anarchist communism, in promoting autonomous and directly accessible organisation, has learnt the lessons. Others who join with the authoritarian communists are condemned already to walking up the gallows and willingly placing the executioner's noose around their necks.

Aims and principles

1. The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class. Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people, as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for them. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

Join us!

THESE ARE indeed grim and demoralising times we are living in. The cut-backs and sackings continue, with the unions heading off any resistance from our class. The United States, with its cronies from an international police force, struts its stuff in gung-ho style in Somalia. Scores of civilians are mown down there, whilst in ex-Yugoslavia the various gangs of nationalist butchers continue their massacres, burnings and rape at the command of the demagogues and warlords.

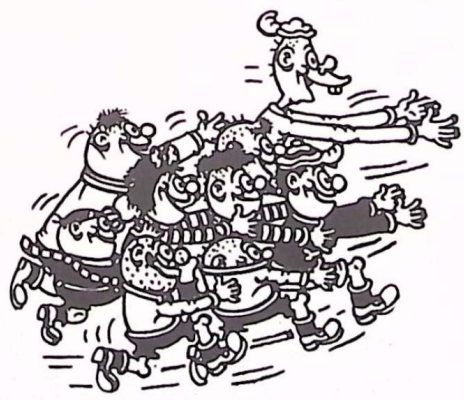
Throughout Europe, the fascist jackals scent blood, crawling out of their lairs to burn and murder. The politicians give them the green light, in line with their desire to strengthen Fortress Europe, to terrify immigrant populations. Fundamentalism continues to act as a blinker to united class action, be it in India with Hindu fundamentalism, or throughout the Muslim world with Islamic fundamentalism, with the 'Khomeintern' at its head.

The lack of community, the deep and spreading feelings of alienation and loneliness are all around us. And look at their idea of culture and civilisation, their Disneyworlds, their MacDonalds, the shit on the television and at the cinema.

Post-modernism is all the rage, with its cultivated air of cynicism and nihilism, using its message of 'anything goes' to launch all-out assaults on the radical gains of the sixties and seventies. Their idea of an intellectual is a talentless charlatan like Julie Burchill or Auberon Waugh. What a joke, what a sick joke! The civilisation of capitalism is shoddy and rotting. A new civilisation must be created through social revolution. Many may sigh and say that this looks highly unlikely at the moment, with the runaway train of capitalism heading towards the cliff.

But mass movements have emerged before at the darkest times, imbued with ideas of social transformation and they can again. We refuse to give in to demoralisation and continue to work towards the creation of a revolutionary movement.

If you agree, then think about joining the ACF and help create a new society based on social justice, ecological harmony and equality.



TERRORISM

ANARCHISTS HAVE LONG been associated with mindless violence in popular images. We can see *The Secret Agent* on television and often read of "riots lead by anarchists" in newspapers. So what have anarchists done to deserve this? The ruling class have always used 'anarchist' as a term of abuse, even before the anarchist movement arose in the 19th century. Today's rulers never miss an opportunity to slander us either. But anarchists are not entirely without blame. Towards the end of the last century many anarchists became impatient with the slow results of 'propaganda by the word' and developed the theory of 'propaganda by the deed'. At first this was understood as the action of determined groups of revolutionaries by demonstrations, insurrections and other forms of collective direct action to ignite an already potentially revolutionary situation. But in later decades it became identified with individual assassinations. It was thought that if anarchist militants took an active lead and physically attacked members of the ruling class the working class would be inspired to revolution.

Damage

This theory was a total disaster. It left perhaps 20 prominent leaders (who were easily replaced) dead, and the whole anarchist movement severely damaged. Governments were given an excuse to pass repressive laws aimed at smashing the workers' movement and to whip up anti-anarchist hysteria. The Russian anarchist communist Kropotkin, who had been a staunch defender of these tactics was one of the first to realise that they were mistaken. In a series of articles in 1890 he stated that: "One must be with the people, who no longer want isolated acts, but want men (sic) of action inside their ranks." He went on to warn against: "the illusion that one can defeat the coalition of exploiters with a few pounds of explosives". It is clear that as a means towards social revolution, terrorism is a non-starter.

If this is the case, then why do terrorist groups exist today ?

Obvious The obvious answer is that the terrorists of today are not interested in social revolution. Most are involved in 'national liberation' struggles, are marxist-leninists or both. They are usually authoritarian vanguardists of the worst kind. In their own terms these groups are occasionally successful, that is they 'liberate' a country or establish a new dictatorship called 'socialism'. Anarchists should have no time for these would-be bosses of tomorrow. Yet terrorism still holds a fascination for some people who would consider themselves anarchists. These range from the cheerleaders, often seen sporting the T-shirt of their favourite terrorist group, to the action men who think we should take up armed struggle now. Much of this can be explained by impatience and a lack of understanding of what social revolution means. To create an anarchist communist society working class people must destroy the current power structure and take power into their own hands. Terrorist groups do nothing to further this aim. Being a small armed élite they take on the role of a vanguard which will solve people's problems for them. Anarchists should be able to see the flaws in any group which has the arrogance to think it can solve the world's problems by itself. At the very least this can lead to further divisions within the working class — between the terrorist leaders and the passive followers. Instead of encouraging people to think and act for themselves, terrorists seek to control struggles for their own ends. As Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Fein said: "This is a special message for young people — no hijackings, no joy riding, no stone throwing at the Brits. If you want to do these things, there are organisations to do it for you." Even terrorist groups which claim to be anarchist cannot escape from their vanguardist nature. An 'anarchist' from the June 2nd Movement in West Germany argued "...analysis of imperialism tells us that the struggles no longer start in the metropolis, it's no longer a matter of the working class, but what's needed is a vanguard in the metropolis that declares its solidarity with the liberation movements of the Third World". This is hardly putting forward a libertarian communist position.

Clarify

The work of revolutionaries is to clarify and co-ordinate struggles as a part of the working class. In non-revolutionary periods anarchist communists will be a conscious minority with 'the leadership of ideas'. We must always be pushing for struggles to go as far as possible and be linked up with other movements. However, we should never let ourselves overestimate our own importance and we should never forget that when revolutions do break out revolutionary organisations are often taken by surprise.

Another question which must be addressed when looking at terrorism is the use of violence. By planting bombs in public places terrorists again show their arrogance and a disturbing contempt for human life. In any bombing campaign, whether by air force, car bomb or parcel bomb, there will inevitably be civilian casualties (or collateral damage if the bombing was done by an air force). Whilst this will provide no problem for the authoritarians of governments and terrorist governments in waiting, for revolutionaries this is unacceptable. We reject the random violence of terrorists but we are not pacifists either.

For us, the old violent tactics/non-violent tactics are falsely polarised. Many activities involving mass action do not involve violence, whilst others do. Large demonstrations and strikes can often turn to violence and we should accept the need for self- defence. Groups like the hit squads arising from the miners strike are genuine expression of working class resistance. It would be foolish to sit in ivory towers of idealistic principles condemning this.

As anarchists we must constantly fight in all areas of life to advance the revolutionary process. At times we will need to defend ourselves against the violence of our enemies. But no matter how hard the struggle is, or how frustrated we are in failure, we must never forget the old declaration: "the emancipation of the workers must be brought about by the workers themselves". Elitist groups of any kind can only be a hindrance to this.

NEW BOOKSHOP

Our Aberystwyth comrades have started a bookshop. Open every day from 10am-5pm at Stall 9, New Mini-Market, St James Square, Aberystwyth.